

never made utilities get rid of generating plants and never banned long-term contracts.

In Montana, deregulation let the dominant electric utility, Montana Power, make big changes. "They decided they wanted to transform themselves from a utility company into a telecommunications operation," De Simone said. (A few years ago, telecommunications meant big profits.)

What became of Montana's power plants? PPL bought them, and the resulting profits are one reason PPL can stay in the black while charging me \$41.37. But Montana's imbeciles took a page from California's book. Among other things, they tried to enact punitive laws (a 3,300 percent tax increase for PPL alone, for example) just because PPL prospered while good-old-boy Montana companies tanked. Ayn Rand, wherever she is, must be laughing herself silly.

Pennsylvania, I guess, will not fall into a California mess, but what if the next diversification idea looks as good as it did when everybody with an MBA degree was pushing the telecommunications spree?

"We [PPL] do a couple of things pretty well ... generating and marketing electricity, and operating the delivery business," De Simone told me.

He said PPL even sold the coal mines that supply many of its generating plants because mining is not its specialty.

How about a nice telecommunications venture?

"Nope," he said.

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Saturday for service.

By Steve Wartenberg
Of The Morning Call

Things were a little different at the Richlandtown Fire Company when John Kandel and Donald Soliday became volunteers in the early 1950s.

"There was a funeral home across the street from the fire station back then," said Kandel, 71. "Since there was someone there 24 hours a day, they took the fire

and grabbed the paper from someone standing out in front of the funeral home."

Soliday, 82, was often the first man there. "I lived across the street and ran over," he said.

On Saturday, these two borough residents, life members of the fire company who have fought more fires than they can count, will be honored for their 50 years of service at a dinner hosted by fire company Chief Tod Fox. "We knew his father," Soliday said of Fox. "He was

of sorts. Kandel's father, Peter, was a life member, and his mother, Esther, was a member of the auxiliary. It seemed only natural for him to join and carry on the family tradition.

Soliday got involved through Polly, his girlfriend who became his wife. Her father was a fireman, her mother a member of the auxiliary, as was Polly. "I went on parades with them," Soliday said. "Then I became a social member, and then, finally, I began going

Kandel and his wife, Mary, will celebrate their 50th on April 9.

Over the years, the two have held a variety of posts with the department. Kandel has been assistant chief, vice president and a trustee; Soliday has been captain, vice president and a trustee.

"I guess it gets in your blood," Soliday said of firefighting.

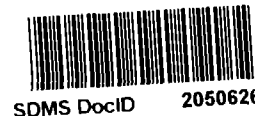
"You just keep doing it and time seems to go by,"

FIREFIGHTERS PAGE B2

separately, spent weeks and months on the phone with them and T.H. Properties hammering out a deal," said Cooke, who lives on Mill Road in Richland Township, just steps away from the development known as Sweetbriar Phase III. "And then they pulled the rug out from under us after all this work."

T.H. Properties owns the 50-acre Suelke tract and proposed to build 80 homes on it just north of Tollgate Road, east of the site of the Lowe's

RICHLAND PAGE B2



EPA finds hazardous solvent in Bally drinking supply

Company responsible gives bottled water to residents, schools.

By Martha Gehringer
Special to The Morning Call

Small amounts of a possible cancer-causing toxin have contaminated the public water supply in Bally, federal environmental officials said.

The company responsible for the contamination, American Household Inc., is providing bottled water to residents and students at the two area schools on the public water system and is looking for a new water supply. Public meetings to discuss the contamination are scheduled for Wednesday.

American Household Inc. is

working on a system to deliver water to concerned consumers and has already taken bottled water to St. Francis Academy and Washington Elementary, which have a combined enrollment of almost 1,000 students.

"Even though the EPA has said it's OK to drink the water, we didn't want to take any chances with the students' health," explained St. Francis Principal Thomas J. Murphy.

Charles Amuso, superintendent of the Boyertown Area School District, agreed and noted the bottled water would continue until the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency finds a solution to the contamination.

The probable carcinogen, a solvent called dioxane, was detected in Bally's wells in February. The contaminant

was found in levels below federal limits and poses no immediate health risk. However, dioxane is classified as a probable human carcinogen and there is concern over long-term exposure to the solvent.

Informational meetings on the contamination will be held on Wednesday at the Bally Firehouse, 537 Chestnut St. Informal sessions will be held from 10 a.m. to noon and 1:30-4:30 p.m. A formal public meeting will be held 6:30-8:30 p.m.

The EPA tested for dioxane after becoming aware of a new test and standards that had been set for the solvent in late 2002, said EPA spokeswoman Bonnie Smith.

The levels found in Bally

WATER PAGE B2



Martha Gehringer Special to The Morning Call

KINDERGARTNERS (from left) Jonathan Paskel, Gabrielle Durante, Matthew Gehringer and Alex Casper get a drink from a water cooler at St. Francis Academy in Bally supplied by American Household Inc..

March 18, 2003
Hickory
Morning Call

Allentown man accused of firing gun that killed mother of 2.

By Romy Varghese
Of The Morning Call

Jury selection, which began Monday, is expected to last all week in the trial of an

Allentown man accused of killing a woman during a robbery at the Lehigh Valley Mall in Whitehall Township.

Eliut Betancourt, 24, is charged with homicide in the death of Carol DiOdoardo of East Allen Township on Oct. 29, 2001. If convicted of first-degree murder, he faces life imprisonment or the death penalty. He also faces charges

to commit a robbery. The rate trial that ended in October. They were sentenced to life in prison.

Prosecutors said that while Colon stayed in the getaway car, Betancourt and Gonzalez targeted DiOdoardo as she walked out of the mall and tried to steal her purse and car.

When the schoolteacher

Martin and Betancourt's attorney, Albert Nelthropp, asked prospective jurors if they could follow the judge's instructions despite their personal beliefs.

For instance, a woman who said she is against the death penalty was dismissed because she said she wasn't sure if that opinion would impair

any. Nelthropp also asked many jurors if they had a problem deciding about Betancourt because of his Puerto Rican heritage.

Martin said he expects testimony to last a week.

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ranged from 20 to 50 parts per billion, which the EPA considers a medium risk. While there are no enforceable levels for this compound in drinking water, EPA's Superfund remediation goal is to reduce the level to 6 ppb.

Among the short-term

health effects of inhalation exposure to high levels of dioxane are vertigo, drowsiness, headache, anorexia and irritation of the eyes, nose, throat and lungs, according to EPA. It also may irritate the skin.

The Bally water supply is being treated for several contaminants by American Household, formerly known as the Sunbeam Corp. In addition to the dioxane, American House-

hold is treating the water for contamination by trichloroethane and trichloroethylene.

American Household has offered two resolutions to the problem. The long-term option would be to treat dioxane at the source — Well No. 3 — by ultraviolet oxidation. But this option has drawbacks, said Mitch Cron, an EPA remedial project manager, because the oxidation produces byproducts that in turn need to be

treated.

The other option is to find a new water source. The EPA, the state Department of Environmental Protection, American Household and Bally borough officials are looking to find an alternate source. But the incorporation of the new water source to the Bally supply system could take six to 12 months, authorities said.

"Bally Borough Council, our consultants and myself are

working diligently towards the goal of ensuring that the borough is provided with the best quality water possible," said Toni Hemerka, Bally borough manager. "Working towards this goal is a total cooperative effort between the borough, EPA, [the state] DEP and American Household."

Martha Gehringer
is a freelance writer.

FILIPAK FROM PAGE B1

parents called on Biehn to sentence Filipak to prison time.

"Justice would be served if this young man is denied some of the liberties and freedoms that Allison won't have the opportunity to enjoy," Eduardo Reboratti said. "If

that happens, maybe he will come out of it with a life sentence of his own."

Biehn said, though, that it was clear Filipak would not survive in a state penitentiary. Biehn said he found himself frustrated and powerless to impose a sentence on Filipak that would make him realize the severity of his crime.

"I can do nothing more than this," Biehn said. "It's

not perfect, but the criminal justice system can't put things back together again. I'm sorry about that."

Following the accident, Filipak spent five months in the hospital. Since then, he has been treated as an outpatient at a rehabilitation clinic.

Filipak will serve at least the next 2½ years of the sentence at Success Rehabilitation in East Rockhill Township. During his sentence he will be

prohibited from leaving the grounds except for field trips that are part of his rehabilitation. He can only be visited once a week by immediate family members, which is the visitation policy practiced at the county jail. Also, he is prohibited from drinking or operating a car for the next 25 years.

He was taken out of the courtroom in custody by deputy sheriffs, but prosecutors made arrangements to trans-

fer him directly to Success Rehabilitation.

"It's a study of what can go wrong by drinking and driving," said Assistant District Attorney John S. Benson. "Prom season is coming around. Here, a wonderfully gifted 19-year-old woman is dead, and all she did was get into the car that night. People have to understand that if you drink and drive this is going to happen."

RICHLAND FROM PAGE B1

Home Center complex that is being constructed. Station Road is just north and east of the Suelke tract.

As a goodwill gesture, Cooke wanted T.H. Properties to purchase Sweetbriar III for \$1.2 million and donate the land approved for 26 homes to the township as open space.

she did on her own," said Supervisor Chairman Steve Tamburri. He added that Cooke presented her plan at public meetings, but received no encouragement from the supervisors. "We neither encouraged nor discouraged her," Tamburri said.

The ongoing disagreement could heat up tonight at the Richland Planning Commission meeting. T.H. Properties will present revised plans for

purchase the Sweetbriar III tract from current owner Dan Soliday and turn it over to the township as open space. The construction of 26 units on the property was approved by township supervisors over 10 years ago — before any of the current supervisors were elected — and still stands, increasing the property's value. The first two phases of the Sweetbriar development are already complete.

"Susan gave a very persua-

dent of Sweetbriar and a Cooke ally. "Developers get a bad name and this was the chance to do the right thing."

According to Hendricks, "I said we'd consider it, but we need to take our direction from the township, not individual residents."

He added that "... it doesn't make a difference to T.H. Properties how the [impact money] is spent. It's up to the township to decide the best use for this fixed amount of

the township for 26 acres was too much.

"Plus, there's a caveat," said Supervisor Patricia Keller. "It was really \$1.2 million for 10 acres, since the 26 units will be on 10 acres and 16 will be left as open space anyway... I don't blame [Cooke] for this. She likes watching the animals and having the space open [near her house], and I might feel the same way if I lived there. But it's different when you're dealing with the best

the supervisor's explanation. "All this is being done behind everyone's back," she said. "They're supposed to have input from the Planning Commission before they decide anything."

And tonight, Cooke said she plans to give the Planning Commission some input.

"We're not anti-supervisors and we don't want this to get personal," Annis said. "I think Susan came up with a great idea; it was real thinking out of the box, not just following

one night in the 1970s. "It took 19 companies to fight it," Soliday said.

"When I got here as a new fireman, I learned a lot from them," said Floyd Bless Jr., who has 40 years of service. "Anytime there was a meeting or a drill, they were there."

Kandel runs Kandel's Barbershop in Richland Township. His grandfather bought the shop in 1920; Kandel's father ran it before he took it over.

Kandel is still active in the department; he drives the fire engine.

How long will he keep driving? "Good question; I guess until they throw me out," he said.

Soliday retired from the manufacturing industry several years ago. Reluctantly, he had to retire from active firefighting about 10 years ago, mostly because of hearing problems.

But he remains active in a variety of ways behind the scenes and still gets the itch whenever he hears the call.

"I miss it; I like to be where the action is," he said. "And when I hear the call, I can just picture what's going on and what they're doing."

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